



ENHANCING WOMEN EDUCATION IN INDIA: AN IMMENSE CHALLENGE TOWARDS EFFECTIVE HUMAN RIGHTS

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ABSTRACT

Education is considered as the only tool for the sustainable development of every society. Women are also a big part of the society. In India, women education has become a major milestone for their empowerment as educated women can also play a very important role inside as well as outside at the development of country. Women's education is an educational initiative that has been embraced by our country. Today our nation is empowering women more and more to access quality education because women and girls' education is essential not only to promoting gender equality but also to addressing the full spectrum of 21st century challenges. Since its Independence, India has been developing women education by implementing new policies, programs, schemes and recommendations in favor of them for having access quality education. Women have also been improving their education but it is not sufficient for the needs of the nation and not as equal as men developing. But, in spite of having such new policies and programs, women of our country remain far behind from men in the field of education. This paper is conducted by details study, observation and survey following a variety of recently published articles, researches, data related to education, Government reports, women's rights and gender inequality to finding out a number of common challenges, issues, problems and barriers which are preventing women in accessing quality education. This paper also highlights some very simple and unique strategies, methods, techniques and solutions to provide quality education for women as an indicator of effective human rights.

INTRODUCTION

Accessing education in the name of continuous learning process starts from mothers' womb. In this sense education is the birth right of all children. The word children does not mean only for boys but also for girls. As Swami Vivekananda said, "Education is the manifestation of perfection already existing in man". According to him, human beings deserve education by birth. Being human, we all accept this birth right as the basic fundamental human rights by putting it in our Indian constitution. The constitution of India has provided equality and compulsory in education to both boys and girls and also provided special priority to women for accessing quality education effectively. In Article 21A, 86 Amendments, 2002, the Constitution of India says that the states shall provide free and compulsory education to all children between the age group of six to fourteen years. Now the right of women education becomes an effective part of human rights. Article 45 mentions universal free and compulsory education till the age of 14 and article 15(1) tells that children are to be provided better opportunities by their parents and guardian for accessing education. Besides these, Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 known as Right to Education (RTE), Education for All (EFL), Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) program, The Distance Primary Education Program (DPEP), Kausturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV), Mahila Samiksha, Padhe Bitiya badhe Bitiya, Ladali scheme, National Program for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) etc. are implemented to empowering them through quality education. But in spite of having above mentioned programs, some common socio-cultural, psycho logical barriers and obstacles are preventing women to achieve quality education. Because of these, they are gradually deprived from their basic fundamental rights of education. John Dewey says: Education is not the preparation for life; education is life itself." But at present it is a big challenge for human rights of the democratic country like India to provide a sound environment for women in accessing quality education.

IMPORTANCE AND NEED OF WOMEN EDUCATION:

"Educate one man, you educate one person, but educate one woman, you educate a whole civilization"

- Mahatma Gandhi

Education is the sharp instrument for women through which they can empower themselves in every context for the development of the country. According to Mahatma Gandhi education means that all round drawing out of the best in child and man's body, mind and spirit. Education is a powerful tool for both men and women to bring any desired change in the society during the passage of time which is a universal fact accepted throughout the world. As Nelson Mandela says, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". Education is the key to eliminate gender inequality, to reducing poverty, to creating a sustainable nation and to fostering peace. This is true not only for our nation, but for countries around the world. And women and men are just like two wings of a bird, or we may say that they are the two wheels of a single chariot. As women constitute all most half of the population of our country (48.36%, GOI, 2017), they should be given equally importance and they should work together in life for development. Failing to educating women means half of the country's people remain non resourceful human beings which spell a bad impact on the current economic status of the nation. As Napoleon once said, "Nation's progress is impossible without trained and educated mothers. If the women of my

country are not educated, about half of the people will be ignorant." In India women education play a very significant role in all round development of the country. It is not only contributing at the development of half of the human resources, but also in improving the sound quality of life at home as well as outside the home. Many philosophers utter that mothers spell a great influence on the lives of their children. They are good thinker to mould their children's thought and characters. George Washington, the first president of USA, spoke of his mother with an admiration to provoke the girls' education: "All I am, I owe to my mother... I attribute all my success in life to the moral, intellectual and physical education I receive from her." (Cited in Nyamidie, 1999). If they are educated and trained properly they will input such impression on their children's mind that enables children in their later lives to reach into a great person in the society.

ONGOING STATUS OF WOMEN EDUCATION IN INDIAN CONTEXT

"It is impossible to think about the welfare of the world unless the condition of the women is improved. It is impossible for a bird to fly on only one wing."

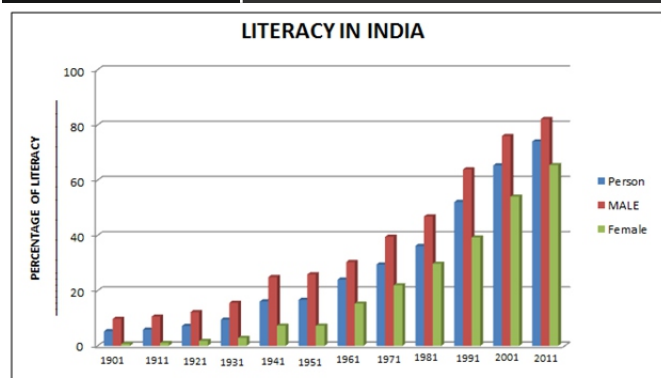
- Swami Vivekananda

According to him the condition of women should be improved when they are to be educated through accessing quality education. The quality education is the best way to allow her into empowerment in all contexts of the society. The government of India tries best to improve their education by introducing special policies and recommendation. But improvement of women education is very less than expected comparing with men. According to census of India, 2011 literacy rate of India is 74.04% where male literacy is 82.14% and female literacy is 65.46%. The increase of female literacy rate from 2001 to 2011 is 11.46%

Year	Overall (%)	MALE (%)	Female (%)
1901	5.3	9.8	0.7
1911	5.9	10.6	1.1
1921	7.2	12.2	1.8
1931	9.5	15.6	2.9
1941	16.1	24.9	7.3
1951	16.7	25.9	7.3
1961	24.0	30.4	15.35
1971	29.5	39.5	21.97
1981	36.2	46.9	29.76
1991	52.1	63.9	39.29
2001	65.38	76.00	54.00
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46

Literacy rate in India, Govt. of India Census 2011

The above table shows that from 2001-2011 the overall literacy rate increases 9.34 % where male increase 6.14 % and female increase 11.46 %. In this time slot female improves literacy rate 5.32% more than male and also 2.12% more than over all literacy. Yet their literacy is 16.68 % less than male literacy in 2011.



So the status of female literacy is very less than male. It has a big responsibility in rural area. It is very painful to notice that literacy of female in rural area is 58.75% where in urban area it is 79.92%

Year	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Overall (%)
1961	10.10	40.50	15.35
1971	15.50	48.80	21.97
1981	21.70	56.30	29.76
1991	30.62	64.04	39.29
2001	46.58	72.99	54.00
2011	58.75	79.92	65.46

The above table shows that female literacy in rural area is very lower than urban area. According to census 2011 female literacy in rural area is 21.17 % less than urban female literacy 2011. From 2001- 2011 rural female literacy increase 12.17% and urban female literacy increases 6.93%. In this time slot rural female literacy improve 5.24 % more than urban female literacy. Yet female literacy in rural area belongs to 21.17% below than urban female literacy.

SOME PROBLEMS, ISSUES AND OBSTACLES AT WOMEN EDUCATION:

There are some common issues and barriers which are preventing women and girls to accessing better education in our country discussed below:

PARENTS' NEGATIVE ATTITUDE:

Parents' negative attitude towards their girls' child is very common obstacle against their education. They think that girls are born for others and after their marriage they leave parents' house permanently. They also think that a women peace and happiness remain in her husband feet only. Because of such wrong concept in their minds, parents don't give importance about girls' education and try to draw their attention in household activities instated of education. Sometimes parents force their daughter to involve household duties during their study period.

POVERTY:

India is cultivation based developing country even in 21st century. It suffers for poverty since independence. Specially most of the families in rural areas are very poor. They lead a struggling life by earning wages for their daily livelihood. Women and girls are also asked for accompany with their parents for earning wages inside as well as outside the home. So, in this struggling livelihood condition, they cannot imagine separately about their girls education.

SON PREFERENCE:

It is the common trend of Indian society that many parents mostly prefer sons than daughters. They think that only son governs their family very carefully and nourishes them up to end of their life span. Parents also think that son is the only propagator for new generation of their family. So, they ignore the girl child and value sons' education by sending school.

SOCIETAL WRONG TREND:

Our society is full of wrong traditional concept and belief. It demoralize girls in accessing higher education by saying that women are being considered inferior to men and her role is to take care of children and household; whereas men are the owner of the family who has absolute power. With this concept, women are confined within the four walls of their house and there is no need of women to be educated. It is a big issue that society demoralizes women in gaining higher education by considering that if a woman is over educated, it is unattainable for her to maintain traditional lifestyle; if a well-educated girl gets on and dose better and better it will be very difficult for her to find a groom who is better qualified in the traditional arrange marriage which still exist in many parts of our country. It is hard to maintain a harmonious married life if her husband is less qualified.

COSTLY IN WOMEN EDUCATION:

It is true that education for girls is very expensive. Especially in higher education it is so costly that parents face difficulty to continue their girls' education. Except

admission fees, tuition fees, form fill-ups girls shall have to pay fees like establishment, hospitality and boarding, health care and medical etc. are comparatively so high that poor families draws back their girls from higher education.

LESS NUMBERS OF HIGHER EDUCATION:

In our country, less number of higher education institutions is a big obstacle for women to access further education. Sufficient higher institutions are not available in every local governing area like semi urban and rural places. For example in a village, there are two or three primary school and only one high school. After that in a block there is only one general college in a district level there is a one university. This scenario is still exists in 21st century. So, the ratio of intermediate and higher institutions is very less and creating problem in higher admission in this age of competition.

DISTANCE AND LOCATION OF INSTITUTIONS:

Women fail to access quality education which is provided by both governments because of long distance and location of higher institutions. After the intermediate examination, if they want to continue education, she has to leave house and stay at boarding or she has to travel a long journey from her house daily which are very costly. Because of that parents unwillingly stop their higher education.

UNAVAILABLE SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE:

It is acceptable fact that girls have some biological and physical factors for which they should be provided free health care in the school where they spend whole the day. Therefore infrastructure like separate toilet, latrine, girls common room, medical facilities, water availability, library etc. are essential but in many school these are not available properly. Most of government primary schools have not separate toilets. Girls are using a common toilet. Even in high school and college level there are no medical dispensary and girls' common room which create dis-interest in their minds to attain the class regularly.

GIRLS' HARASSMENT IN SCHOOL:

Though the government of India and school authority becomes aware against girls' harassment, yet it is still exist. In Indian school context from primary to high level girls are being harassed mentally and physically by many ways. Even in higher education women are being harassed by college politics and forced to involve political activities. Because of that they are being mentally disturb and unwilling to continue their education.

LONG DURATION OF COURSES IN HIGHER EDUCATION:

Parents of both urban and rural areas have little bit tension about their daughters' marriage in future. They are in a state of thinking that they have to give their daughters' marriage under the appropriate group of age for their welfare. But in higher education the duration of courses is so long that parents are not wishing to peruse higher degree and diploma. Even after their marriage their husband also does the same as parents do and sometimes women also willingly leave their further education because of long duration courses.

LACK OF SKILLED BASED COURSES:

It is true that many women very skillful in household activities. They love to do finest handwork like weaving, embroidery, cooking, nursing, baking etc. But in school there is no such kinds of skill based subjects which bring them interestingly in the school to continue education.

GENDER DISPARITIES IN SUBJECT CHOICE:

Another barrier against women education is that gender disparities in school education. Many people, parents, elders and even sometimes school teachers suggest women not to take subject like mathematics, physics, chemistry, political science, computer science, etc. because these are suitable only for male. And some particular social science subjects are for women. In this way they demoralize women to access higher quality education.

BIASED SYLLABUS AND CURRICULUMS:

Most of the schools under state government follow traditional syllabus and curriculums which caters gender biased in using masculine language and pictures, activities and group works in their textbook. It bears no cultural influence of their own region to motivate them. This type of traditional school syllabus and curriculums demoralize women and fail to throw positive impact on their lives which will encourage them for further learning.

LACK OF FEMALE TEACHERS:

It is fact that female teachers can feel and understand the arising problems and wishes of girls during their study. Women can also share their experiences and issues related to study and others freely to female teachers during the school hours. But many schools do not have proper number of skilled female teachers in primary and upper primary level. They are facing the problems in better communication and being suffered in conflict. So this thing fears girls to attain the school regularly.

LACK OF PROPER GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING IN SCHOOL:

Women specially in single sex school are not being informed properly about when and where notification for higher education has been published. They cannot know which institutions are better for which subjects and which degree, diploma and professional courses are to be taken for higher education because of

lack of proper guidance and counseling in school education. Even they are not being informed about government new reservation, scholarship and other facilities for them.

ISSUES OF SINGLE SEX INSTITUTIONS:

Some conservative families like their women to send in single sex institutions. It is an issue that families do not try to want whether their female like to go such institutions or not. In these type of institutions they feel segregated from others students of the schools which creates despair to continue their schooling. Therefore some female like themselves to attain in these schools, but because of the unavailable infrastructure, boarding facilities, lack of female teachers and security they do not come in class regularly.

LACK OF WOMEN STUDIES BASED TEACHERS:

It is one of the greatest barriers for accessing quality education that women are being taught by those male and female teachers who have no knowledge of women and gender studies to promote their higher learning. They have taught the class traditionally giving no special importance to women and often they use masculine word like 'He' to address the whole class which caters a sense of inferior and demoralizes women to pay attention in the class.

LACK OF SUFFICIENT RESERVATION AND FINANCIAL HELP:

It is undeniable thing that because of their biological barriers, poor family condition and other households activities, women are logging behind in higher education in this age of competition. We need some more special recommendations. But the government reservation policy, financial help are not sufficient and not reachable to women for lack of better communication and information.

SOME SIMPLE SOLUTIONS, SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

There are some common problems since very earlier discussed above which are preventing women in accessing quality education. No others such kinds of problems are overlapping with previous one. So, against these problems we need simple and unique strategy to provide better education for them.

CREATING PARENTS' AWARENESS:

As I discussed earlier that parents' negative attitude compels girls to stop their education. So against it government should take to make aware the parents about the needs and importance of women education. The government can create a team member of an awareness program to inspire parents through motivational speech. The parents should be motivated by informing that today our country needs girls' education for the welfare of the nation as well as their families as educated women can lead their family very successfully. Because of these needs of country and society, the government has started new policies, programs and financial help in favor of girls' education to empower them through quality education. The team should explain simply in details of government's all positive steps and inspire them through motivational speech to allow their girls in continuing government provided quality education.

GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL HELPS:

Government must be known that parents in rural areas are not able to make continue their women education. Even many girls unwillingly left their higher education because of their parents' poverty. So to bring them main stream of the education, government's more supports in financial helps through scholarship, free ship, free admission, reservation in higher education, free hostel facilities, less establishment, courses fees etc. are to be provided.

PROMOTE OPEN AND DISTANCE INFORMAL LEARNING:

Open and distance learning mode becomes the institutions to pursue higher degree and diploma for those who are already a highly degree or job holders. It does not reach to women especially in rural areas. So the government should promote and increase the number of open and distance learning institutions in rural areas and they should reserve number of seats for women so that after marriage they can continue their higher education. The government can set up open and distance higher learning mode of institutions in every remote areas under nearby government high schools, as after their schooling they left study for the lack of nearby higher institutions. The authority can also open study centers like IGNOU, NIOS etc. in every rural area to promote women education.

PROMOTE INTEGRATED COURSES:

It is true that for the long duration of higher degree and diploma courses, many women loss their patient to continue higher education. The government should short duration higher integrated courses in every institution. They can start the courses like integrated B.A.B.ED, B.SC. B.ED, M.A.M.ED, M.SC.M.ED, B.ED.M.ED, M.PHIL.PHD, integrated D.L.ED etc. to encourage them for continuing higher education within short period of time.

ROLE OF TEACHERS:

Teachers from primary to higher institutions are to be trained and guided by the government programmers about how to teach both male and female in a co-ed-school classroom by giving special importance to female without any sense of discrimination. The teachers should not create any disparities in subject choosing, classroom participation, group activities, classroom sitting etc. They should not use any masculine words of languages by giving priority to male. But they should

use the words like 'He/she' and some neutral words like pupils, students, children to address the whole class. They must communicate with their parents to inform about their classroom performances and problems in studying.

PROMOTING GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING IN SCHOOLS:

It has a significance role in single sex institution in both areas. The teachers should always provide guidance and counseling through up to date news of higher education. They should provide information of the government's new policies, programs, Act, recommendations etc. for women education to inspire them for further education. The teachers in class always provide upcoming news of admission notification, institutions' name, dead line and other institution's facilities so that they cannot deprive from the opportunity of accessing higher quality education.

ROLE OF FEMALE TEACHERS:

Female teachers must play the vital role at the welfare of women education. They will know the better strategies and solutions to bring women in the main stream of education. So our government should employ more female teachers in every school, college and education institution. In classroom teaching female teachers must give special emphasis on women's classroom performances and outside the class they can arrange informal class to provide guidance and counseling to encourage girls in higher education by informing them how importance and need of women education is in our nation.

PROMOTING TRAINEE – TEACHERS:

Trainee teachers must be encouraged to play an important role to promoting female in accessing quality education in the name of project work, multicultural program, school exposure program etc. in their syllabus. They can work in a group of five to ten students and can be sent to a nearby school to finding out the progress of women education. They can make a project report of drop out girl students of the school with possible reason of drop out and submit one copy to school authority and bring another copy in their institution for evaluation of marking. It will help them in future as a teacher to provide better education strategies in classroom teaching for female. They can also go in a group to remote area for promoting parents to send their female in school and make a report on the view of parents for what reason they stop their education.

PROMOTE SKILL BASED COURSES:

As I discussed women are very much expert in hand made work and households activities. So the authority should start skill based courses like vocational, nursing, embroidery, cooking and baking classes, to draw their attention in class. Therefore the government should start the compulsory class like music, dance, art and culture in every school to focus on their potential skill.

PROMOTE WOMEN AND GENDER STUDIES:

Gender and women studies will play a significance role to encourage women for continuing their education. It will help students to mould zero discrimination minds in education as well as in the society. So the authority can start compulsory gender and women studies in upper primary classes in the name of civics. It will help men and women to know how women education is importance in the present context.

DEVELOPED SYLLABUS AND CURRICULUM:

Syllabus and curriculum must be developed on the basis of needs of the society for both male and female. It should not create any gender bias and disparity among students. The objectives of syllabus and curriculum must provide equal opportunity of all round development for both students. It must balance equality, especially in textbook by putting both male and female pictures, activities, questions and neutral words to motivate them in education.

INCREASING HIGHER INSTITUTIONS:

The government should think deeply about the ratio of higher institution and enrolment students. It is fact that because of lack of higher institution many women are logging behind from the admission in higher education and left education comparatively more than men. So the government may increase the number of higher educational institution and will provide more seats for women to access.

RESETTING SINGLE SEX INSTITUTION:

Some families like to send their women in single sex institution for good life security. Some women also love to come in women institution with great expectation of better quality education. So, the authority should pay attention for redesign of school syllabus and curriculum, infrastructure, high security, employment of quality female teachers etc. If possible the government can set up new women institution to provide education.

GOOD SECURITY AND TRANSPORT:

Even, now a day women are feeling insecure in schools and being harassed on the way of schools by many ways. So the school authority must provide high security in schools campus. With the help of government every school must provide transport facilities for the well fare of women.

SCHOOL WELL-INFRASTRUCTURE:

For the better welfare of female students, the school authority must provide good

infrastructure facilities like water, classroom environment, electricity, ICT laboratory, internet, library, garden etc. to bring them at school effectively.

HEALTH CARE IN SCHOOL:

We all know female are the future mothers of the nation and they have some biological factors for which the authority should need to provide special health care in school because they spend most of the time in classroom. So the authority must provide health care and medical facilities in institutions so that they do not feel any insecure of health to come in schools or colleges.

MORE PROGRAM, POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The government must feel that women are staying far behind from the main stream of education. To bring them in the main path, the government and others should help by providing more new programs, policies in favor of them for accessing quality education. If possible the government must provide reservation facilities like OBC, SC, ST for women in qualified marks, services and others.

CONCLUSION:

From the above discussion, it is understood that women even in 21st century of India are facing some common obstacles in the field of accessing education. Because of these obstacles, there creates a wide gap of literacy between male and female. The above mentioned some simple and unique solutions and suggestions may be followed to improve the status of women education. Women education is now one of the most important components of our basic fundamental human rights and without improving this, our human rights remain incomplete. Therefore the development of our nation depends on the status of women improvement as almost half of the country's people is covered by them. Education is a unique and powerful weapon which can develop women empowerment in every level of the country. The Nobel Peace prize laureate Malala Yousafzai in her autobiography utters, "One child, one teacher one book and one pen can change the world. Education is the only solution." So this is the time for our nation to provide more quality education in drawing them at the lifeline of education as a progressive sign of our bright human rights.

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